90 years
CONCERTS FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
2015 • 2016

The McKim Fund in the Library of Congress

Frederic Rzewski, Jennifer Koh and the Del Sol String Quartet

Friday, April 29, 2016 ~ 9:00 pm
Saturday, April 30, 2016 ~ 8:00 pm
Coolidge Auditorium
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building

The MCKIM FUND in the Library of Congress was created in 1970 through a bequest of Mrs. W. Duncan McKim, concert violinist, who won international prominence under her maiden name, Leonora Jackson; the fund supports the commissioning and performance of chamber music for violin and piano.

"LIKE" us at facebook.com/libraryofcongressperformingarts

loc.gov/concerts

The commission and premieres on these two programs will be available to hear at q2music.org/libraryofcongress, as part of the ongoing collaboration between the Library of Congress and Q2 Music.

Continuing the vital practice of commissioning music from today's composers, and in celebration of the anniversary seasons of both institutions, the Library of Congress and The Phillips Collection have joined forces and commissioned new works for violin and piano from prominent American composer Frederic Rzewski. The commissions will premiere on back-to-back days.

PHILLIPS

Part I–Library of Congress: Saturday, April 30, 8pm
Part II–The Phillips Collection: Sunday, May 1, 4pm

Please request ASL and ADA accommodations five days in advance of the concert at 202-707-6362 or ADA@loc.gov.

Latecomers will be seated at a time determined by the artists for each concert.

Children must be at least seven years old for admittance to the concerts.

Other events are open to all ages.

Please take note:

Unauthorized use of photographic and sound recording equipment is strictly prohibited.

Patrons are requested to turn off their cellular phones, alarm watches, and any other noise-making devices that would disrupt the performance.

Reserved tickets not claimed by five minutes before the beginning of the event will be distributed to stand-by patrons.

Please recycle your programs at the conclusion of the concert.

The Library of Congress
Coolidge Auditorium
Friday, April 29, 2016 — 9:00 pm

The McKim Fund in the Library of Congress

Library Late:
Del Sol String Quartet

Benjamin Kreith, Violin
Rick Shinozaki, Violin
Charlton Lee, Viola
Kathryn Bates, Cello

Program

Ruth Crawford [Seeger] (1901-1953)

String Quartet 1931 (1931)

I. *Rubato assai–Più mosso–Tempo primo–Più mosso–Tempo primo–Meno mosso–Più mosso–Meno mosso–Più mosso–Meno mosso*

II. *Leggiero* (*tempo giusto*)

III. *Andante–Doppio movimento–Quasi tempo primo–Tempo primo*

IV. *Allegro possibile*

FREDERIC RZEWSKI (b. 1938)

String Quartet (1955), World Premiere

I. *Andante–Allegro–Meno mosso e rubato–A Tempo–Tempo I–Più mosso–Tempo I–Allegro–Meno mosso e rubato–A Tempo–Meno mosso e risoluto–A Tempo–Andante*

II. *Allegretto ben marcato–Più mosso–Tempo primo–Più mosso...–Largamente–Doppio movimento*

III. *Adagio molto–Largo–Adagio–Largo*

IV. Mazurka: *Vivace*

V. Recitativo: *Lento*

VI. *Allegro molto–Presto–Lento, L'istesso Tempo del Recitativo–Presto non troppo–Lento–Prestissimo–Allegro molto–Adagio–Allegro molto–Presto–Stretto (Tempo di Allegro)–Presto–Molto meno mosso–Presto–Pesante*

About the Program

RUTH CRAWFORD [SEEGER],[1] *String Quartet 1931*

There's modern, and then there's ultra-modern. Ruth Crawford belonged to that daring school of American "ultra-modernists" that included composers like Henry Cowell and Carl Ruggles, producing an inventive body of work in a short space of time.[2] She is now recognized as a major contributor in both composition and folk music; most of her "concert music" predated her marriage to Charles Seeger in 1932, when her professional focus shifted to the folk realm. The complexities of her relationship to composition have been increasingly explored as Crawford's reputation has grown, for instance in Judith Tick's 1997 biography of the composer.

While Crawford has not always been a mainstream figure, her ability was recognized by musicians in a position to support her efforts, especially with respect to the *String Quartet 1931*. Of all her compositions, it was the string quartet that did the most to solidify Crawford's reputation and ultimately increase awareness of her music. It is significant that the *Andante* movement comprised the first side of the first record produced in Henry

1 Ruth Crawford was not yet married to Charles Seeger when she composed the *String Quartet 1931*; in the literature she is referred to as both Ruth Crawford and Ruth Crawford Seeger. For ease of reference, I will refer to her by her maiden name of Crawford in these notes.

2 It is a useful reminder, when considering these ultra-modern composers from the 1920s and '30s, that a condition of stylistic plurality is not unique to the current world of contemporary music. It remains one of the strengths of new music that there is so much variety, but it also presents challenges with respect to shared experiences and awareness of compositional activity across the map.

Cowell's New Music Society Recording Series. In a letter to Charles Ives in 1933, Cowell expressed that the *Andante* was "...perhaps the best thing for quartet ever written in this country. This is my unqualified opinion..."[3] Cowell published the quartet in a revised form in 1941, and it was later recorded by the Amati Quartet in 1960 and the Composers Quartet in 1973—these recordings and attendant live performances helped to revive interest in Crawford's music.[4]

Crawford started to compose the quartet while traveling abroad on a Guggenheim fellowship to Berlin.[5] While it was premiered in 1933, the form in which we know the piece was the result of revisions from 1938. The *Andante* movement that Cowell recorded, for instance, was not the same as the one we now know—the significant moment where the texture breaks from the established norm was not there originally, and Crawford would continue to adjust this spot even after the work was published.[6] It may be that Crawford returned to the *String Quartet 1931* in 1938 because of her intention to compose a second string quartet, with the aim of reconciling simplicity and "dissonant counterpoint." She made some headway with the work but found that it was quite a difficult piece; Crawford proposed that she would "...call them Etudes for String Quartet–then there won't be so much fuss about their being difficult... Will I ever write really simple music?"[7]

Crawford's *String Quartet 1931* is set in a compact four movements.[8] The first movement starts with the juxtaposition of a lyrical violin line against an aggressively rising cello idea. There are several primary themes in this short movement, and Crawford's manipulation of the material in this movement and others is quasi-serial in approach. There is a fascinating draft of the first movement in which Crawford labeled the appearances and transformations of the four principal ideas.[9] While one can trace the manipulations that Crawford identifies (transpositions, inversions, retrogrades or "crabs"), the use of such devices is not always very strict, as there are interval substitutions that Crawford uses as needed in her free counterpoint. The interplay of the musical lines is energetically unbound while at the same time there is a clear directionality to the ideas. It is often a sustained tone or slower-moving melodic idea that serves as the grounding-line for the

3 As quoted in Tick, Judith, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 186. Ives funded the recording despite initial reservations.

4 Tick, Judith, "Writing the Music of Ruth Crawford into Mainstream Music History," in *Ruth Crawford Seeger's Worlds*, ed. Ray Allen and Ellie M. Hisama (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 12-16.

5 Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 155-57.

6 Ibid., 215-16.

7 De Graaf, Melissa J., "The Reception of an Ultramodernist," in *Ruth Crawford Seeger's Worlds*, ed. Ray Allen and Ellie M. Hisama (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 102-103. I find that this is a sentiment shared by many composers—complexity tends to arise despite efforts to minimize it, making criticism of this aspect by performers and audience doubly frustrating.

8 The Library of Congress holds a number of materials related to the *String Quartet 1931*, including the 1938 draft, its first published edition, and earlier draft material.

9 Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger,* 213-214.

ear, especially as the frenetic activity of the movement diminishes to allow the clarity of a single line to emerge, lastly in the viola and second violin.

The second movement scherzo begins immediately, with a loud *tutti* chord launching from the cello's sustained A-flat. In this movement one may have the sense of a single line chasing after itself. Largely scalar motion is used in each voice, creating a composite *perpetuo mobile* effect. Crawford playfully incorporates pizzicato lines as the movement progresses, ultimately unraveling the entwined strands into a single descending scale.

One could describe a dramatic path across the movements that led from a multiplicity of themes articulated by individual instruments in the first, to a united exploration of a primary idea inflected by each instrument in the second, to an emergent "melodic line" in the third movement, of which Cowell spoke so highly. In this *Andante*, Crawford created something akin to a dynamic/pulse equivalent of Schoenberg's *Klangfarbenmelodie*.[10] Crawford wrote an analysis of the third and fourth movements of her quartet at the request of Edgard Varèse,[11] and there she describes her plan as a "...heterophony of dynamics—a sort of counterpoint of crescendi and diminuendi... No high point in the crescendo in any one instrument coincides with the high point in any other instrument... The melodic line grows out of this continuous increase and decrease..."[12] In this way the listener is presented with a remarkable way to interact with the material—the melody is followable but is always situated in its own harmonic context. That is, at the moment of a pitch's emergence as a melodic entity it becomes a sustained part of the harmony. Crawford's development of the material in this way is highlighted by the startling exception to the rule, where the music breaks from the pulse model for two dramatic measures. The sudden descent of the pulse material that follows this counteracts the largely upward pull of the material to that point—swiftly returning to the interval class that opened the movement: the viola's low C-sharp, instead of being inflected by the D a half-step above as in the beginning, is now paired with the cello's low C (a half-step and an octave below).

The final movement opens with the first violin alone on a low A-flat, followed by a pair of notes (G-A) that echo the scherzo's opening melodic content. The other three instruments follow with a unison (at the octave) stream of twenty notes. This is in fact the setup for a clever gambit that Crawford exposes in structural terms: the first violin's material is additive (first one note, then two, then three, and so on), while the remainder of the quartet goes through a subtractive process in the presentation of its pitch stream (20, 19, 18, etc.). At the center of this short movement, the first violin sustains the final note of a 21-pitch series, atop the single sustained pitch held in the other voices. The process is then reversed, so that the movement ends with a single accented pitch played by the first violin. This is interesting enough, but much more is going on here. A similar process is

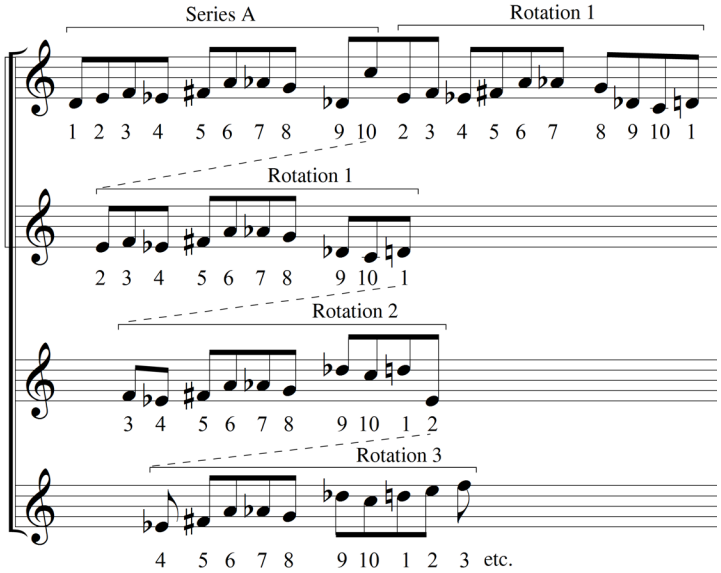
10 While of course the individual instruments and strings in concert with various techniques can create a wide variety of tone color in a string quartet, the overall sound is more homogenous than in a wind quintet, for example. Crawford created an analog of sorts for shaping melody through tone color, here achieved through the emergence of specific emphases via dynamic pulsation.

11 Tick, 215.

12 Ruth Crawford as quoted in Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 357-358.

played out in the distance between entrances (that is, the rests follow a certain pattern of subtraction and addition in terms of length, differentiated from the progression that governs the number of attacks). The pitches that comprise the stream of the second voice are based on a series of ten notes that go through a process of rotation; after the series of ten pitches passes, the series restarts but at the next position in line:[13]

EXAMPLE 1



Ruth Crawford, *String Quartet 1931*, IV: extracted from series in violin II, viola and cello parts

What this causes in effect is a familiar melodic profile to be heard with varying intervals at the suture points. Coupled with octave transpositions, the music is both familiar and surprising. In a sense, the closing movement of Crawford's string quartet is like an ultra-modern update to the finale of Chopin's op. 35 piano sonata. In Crawford's analysis concerning these series she writes that "...There is a loose thread in the persian [sic] rug: in measure 24 the 10th tone of the 2nd occurrence of the transposed 10-tone row is omitted (f-sharp), making only 9 tones in that occurrence. Correspondingly, in measure 93, one tone is absent."[14] Perhaps instead of viewing it as a loose thread that could unravel the whole creation, it might be considered an intentional "imperfection" that draws attention to the craftsmanship of the work.

The multiple professional and familial lives of Ruth Crawford proved difficult at times for her family and her self to understand. Crawford's daughter Peggy Seeger once stated: "I don't understand how the woman that I knew as a mother created something like the 1931 string quartet. It is like someone crying; it is like someone beating on the walls...

13 Ibid., 359.
14 Ibid.

and I don't want to think about this as regarding my mother because my mother always seemed to me to have it all together, to have gotten a life that pleased her."[15] This is an interesting statement, as the dissonance between this response to the emotional power of Crawford's work and the quartet's carefully organized nature demonstrates the success of a composer in command of her material. The more troubling remark is at the end, as Peggy Seeger's statement suggests the quartet was evidence that perhaps something in Crawford's life had not pleased her. It may be that from Crawford's vantage, however, it was precisely the composition of things like her string quartet that provided an outlet that she later found lacking in her life. It seems that Crawford did want to compose further in her manner of the 1920s and '30s, and her frustration on this point was evident as she neared the end of her cancer-shortened life. In conversation with Sidney Cowell shortly before her death, Crawford said that "I had been thinking about writing some music that had nothing to do with folk song. I have thought about some things and Ruth Crawford is still there."[16] The composer never left—and while we regret the loss of what she might have composed had she lived longer, it is a pleasure to be able to experience her work live in performance.

David Henning Plylar
Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division

Frederic Rzewski, String Quartet

The string quartet by Frederic Rzewski programmed this evening was composed in 1955, and has never been performed until now. I am always curious when I come across these types of pieces,[17] because often the unperformed state of the music means that the composer wrote it out of some inner compulsion, without regard to a fee, deadline, or other potentially constraining circumstance. Perhaps it was composed as a student project, but this would not diminish the evidence of the effort involved.

Recently, the composer and pianist Abdullah Ibrahim was interviewed by my colleague Larry Appelbaum. Appelbam had shown Ibrahim some copyright deposits that he had submitted (at that time under the name Dollar Brand) in 1965, and asked what Ibrahim would do differently, if anything, were he to revive the pieces today, since he had expressed an interest in possibly doing so. Ibrahim, with a pronounced orientation toward considering things anew in the present, summed up his response thusly: "Ancient tradition, new relevance."[18] Tonight we have the opportunity to hear an early work by Rzewski, far removed from its original context. Who knows what experiencing it in 1955

15 As quoted in Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger*, 355.

16 Ibid., 349.

17 Unfortunately, I know too many composers who have works that remain unperformed for various reasons.

18 Abdullah Ibrahim in conversation with Larry Appelbaum, Library of Congress, April 19, 2016.

might have yielded for the composer? It is an unusual treat to be able to hear this musical time-capsule knowing something of the paths that the composer ended up taking between then and now.

~ David Henning Plylar

Note from the Composer:
Thanks to David Plylar, this fossil of my youth has come alive again, like some creature from Jurassic Park. He has asked me to write something about it. To be quite sincere, it was so long ago (60 years!) that I can hardly remember what went through my mind as I wrote it. I have never heard it. I do not play a stringed instrument. I have barely looked at it since it became clear that it would never be played. It is only by pure chance that it has survived at all; many other pieces have been lost in the process of moving from place to place, or have simply disappeared for one reason or another.

I do remember that at that time I fell immediately and desperately in love with every woman who crossed my path. So I can only assume that this music must have something to do with love, especially the unhappy sort. I also know that I listened constantly to recordings of various kinds—Beethoven, Ravel, Bartòk, Schönberg, etc.—and that this must have shown up somewhere in this piece, although as I look it over I can't immediately identify what is stolen from which composer. It looks like the work of a talented student, with all of the strong and weak elements typical of such students. There is undoubtedly some originality in the general conception; but at the same time there is clearly a lot of fakery as well. It is easy to spot places where the composer is pretending, simply borrowing clichés he has seen in this or that score by this or that composer, but doesn't really know anything about: all these ridiculous glissandi, for example, or the places marked "sul ponticello," etc., when it is obvious he knows nothing about string technique. If I were his teacher I would tell him to strike this stuff out immediately. But it is too late for that...

One thing I have learned from several decades of teaching is that, although it is possible to recognize talent immediately, it is impossible to predict whether that talent will go anywhere. Almost all children, for example, are great painters at age five. Great musicians, great poets, dancers, circus performers. Then, for one reason or another (usually already in first grade), they gradually peel off to become bankers, soldiers, garbage collectors, gangsters... Similarly with composition students. Some of them (not necessarily the most interesting) go on to do something with themselves, with that dogged stubbornness that refuses to be told what to do or what not to do, which seems to be the main thing one needs if one wants (God knows why) to be a composer; others (who may in fact be the most talented, we will never know) simply decide they are no good (which is what capitalist society tells everyone in general), give up, turn to drugs or alcohol, or destroy themselves in one way or another. This is not a conscious choice, and it is quite impossible to tell which way the student will go. In this particular case, the student in question seems to have done a little of all of these things. How it will all end is still an open question. I may have a clearer idea once I have finally heard this piece, after more than half a century...

~ Frederic Rzewski

The Library of Congress
Coolidge Auditorium
Saturday, April 30, 2016 — 8:00 pm

THE MCKIM FUND IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

FREDERIC RZEWSKI, JENNIFER KOH AND THE DEL SOL STRING QUARTET

Program

FREDERIC RZEWSKI (b. 1938)

Winter Nights (2015)

Flowers (2009)

Frederic Rzewski, piano

Satires, for violin and piano (2015), World Premiere

1. *A Serious Business*
2. *One Damn Thing After Another*
3. *Wig Bubble*
4. *Southern Breeze*
5. *Life is a Riddle*

Jennifer Koh, violin
Frederic Rzewski, piano
Commissioned by the McKim Fund in the Library of Congress

INTERMISSION

George Antheil (1900-1959)

String Quartet no. 1 (1924-5)

Allegretto Allegro–Calme–A tempo–Plus lent–Très Calme–Toujours Calme–Un peu plus de Mouvement–Calme–Tempo primo–Très Calme–Tempo primo–Le même mouvement, mais très articulé–Lent–Calme–Tempo primo–Calme–Tempo primo...Très Calme–Tempo primo–Tranquille–Tempo primo–Calme–Andante (très rubato et espressivo)–Toujours calme très Andante

Ben Johnston (b. 1926)

String Quartet no. 10 (1995-6)

I. *Brisk, intent*
II. *Solemn*
III. *Deliberate but as fast as possible*
IV. *Sprightly, not too fast*

Del Sol String Quartet

About the Program

Frederic Rzewski, *Winter Nights, Flowers* and *Satires*

The piano music of Frederic Rzewski is a significant body of work that continues to expand. From the now-classic variation set *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* to his epic "novel" for solo piano, *The Road*, and cycles of works like the *Nanosonatas* to standalone character pieces, Rzewski's output covers a vast creative territory. It helps that as a composer-pianist he is able to give voice to the works himself, but in some cases he does so quite literally, beyond the keyboard—works like *De Profundis* are scored for "speaking pianist," and incorporate speech, breath,[19] and other sounds made with the human and piano bodies. Rzewski's selections for this evening's performance include a speaking-pianist work from 2009 and a commission for the pianist Bobby Mitchell from 2015.

The Library of Congress commissioned *Satires* (through the McKim Fund in the Library of Congress) for violin and piano as part of a collaborative effort with The Phillips Collection, which commissioned another new violin/piano work from Rzewski entitled *Notasonata* in celebration of their 75th anniversary season. *Notasonata* will be premiered on Sunday, May 1 at 4pm at The Phillips Collection, performed by Jennifer Koh and Ursula Oppens; the remainder of the program will feature Oppens and Rzewski performing music for piano four-hands by Morton Feldman and Lou Harrison.

~ David Henning Plylar

19 One might say this is part of Rzewski's most aspirational music.

Winter Nights

Note from the Composer:

In 2014 the Canadian poet Eleonore Schönmaier (*Wavelengths of Your Song*) asked me to write a piece for Bobby Mitchell's 30th birthday. Bobby is a wonderful pianist and a good friend, so of course I agreed. Among the pieces that he does often and well are my *War Songs* of 2008. These pieces, although technically not that difficult, are very hard to get across to an audience. They are very introspective, and written in a kind of uncompromising polytonality that is distinctly against the prevailing fashion of easily consumed hard-driving optimism. But he manages to put them across in a way that I myself apparently can't. So I decided to continue the introspective thing, almost daring him to do the impossible.

These *Winter Nights* are very gloomy. There are three of them, progressively more and more depressing. At the same time they are supposed to put you to sleep. I suffer from insomnia, and asked my doctor about it. But all she can do is prescribe pills, which are not what I want. I began to think, isn't there some kind of music that might have this effect? Bach's *Goldberg Variations* were supposed to do this. John Field's and Chopin's *Nocturnes* presumably also. Some time in the 1970's I heard the violinist Paul Zukofsky play John Cage's *Freeman Etudes*, arguably the most boring piece ever written, at the Villa Medicis in Rome. It was summertime, and I drifted off to sleep in the warm Roman air. I told Cage this, and he said: "If the music makes you fall asleep, it proves that it's good."

I have tried going through my *Winter Nights* in my head as I lie awake at three a.m., and I have to confess that it doesn't work. But in January 2016, Bobby played my pieces in New York, with an ardent supporter in the audience, who fell asleep immediately and was out for the whole performance. So I guess it just comes down to the performer; some have what it takes, others not.

Flowers

Note from the Composer:

In 2009 the British composer Howard Skempton—a good friend whom I have kown since the days of the Scratch Orchestra in the 1960's—asked me to write a piece in memory of his wife Sue, who had recently died of cancer. I felt very deeply for Howard, not merely because he is a longtime friend and lovable and generous person, but also because I was suffering myself from a personal loss. I was also very much involved in music for speaking pianist. At the time I was deeply into the novels of Charles Dickens. I found the following text from *Little Dorrit* (Book I, end of chapter 28), which seemed appropriate:

> "He was left alone. When he had walked on the river's brink in the peaceful moonlight, for some half an hour, he put his hand in his breast and tenderly took out the handful of roses. Perhaps he put them to his heart, perhaps he put them to his lips, but certainly he bent down on the shore, and gently launched them on the flowing river. Pale and unreal in the moonlight, the river floated them away.

> The lights were bright within doors when he entered, and the faces on which they shone, his own face not excepted, were soon quietly cheerful. They talked of many subjects... And so to bed, and to sleep. While the flowers, pale and unreal in the moonlight, floated away upon the river; and thus do greater things that once were in our breasts, and near our hearts, flow from us to the eternal seas."

Howard himself did the first performance of this piece shortly afterwards, at Café Oto in London. I myself have stayed away from it, perhaps because it has such close personal significance for me. This concert at the Library of Congress in 2016 will be the first time I have played it myself. Loss is a common human experience that binds us together. Sooner or later we come to accept it, as we ourselves gradually flow to the eternal seas...

Satires

Note from the Composer:

There seems to be little, if any, agreement on what satire is. It seems best described by stating what it is not. It belongs to no particular category or style. It is neither poetry nor prose; neither art nor ordinary, vulgar speech; not serious, but not trivial either; nothing at all, really. It is a little like comedy, but is not necessarily funny. It is "realistic" in that it follows an impulsive logic like that of everyday life, in which anything can happen at any time. It is unpretentious, unlike "serious" art, but at the same time tries to be witty and entertaining. When successful, it is like a good conversation, spontaneous and unpremeditated, with no other purpose than to provide pleasure—while also trying to be useful. If you look at Horace's *Satires*, you can see he is both funny and serious at the same time. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? The Rome of that time was fickle and unpredictable. He fought against Octavian. He could have been exiled to Dacia, like Ovid. Instead he, a nobody with no family connections, was smiled upon by a whimsical Fate, given a farm in the Sabine hills, where he was free to write and eat and drink with friends like Maecenas.

Our own time is in many ways similar. Is a certain political candidate funny or scary? The U.S.A. is often compared with ancient Rome. The difference, of course, is that we have no Virgil, but does anybody? Russia had its Tolstoy; but that was more than a century ago. Our time has not found its own form. It has no form. Shakespeare, Molière, and Monteverdi created a theatre in which the ancient models of tragedy and comedy were fused. To which does *Don Juan* belong? If you play *Hamlet* as a tragedy, it becomes funny. It is impossible to take Orfeo seriously, because he is himself responsible for his own undoing. Instead of facing the future, he looks back. All of these modern myths, Faust, Frankenstein, Dracula, and all the others, fail as tragic figures, simply because they insist on remaining in the past, refusing, in a ridiculous way, to get a life that is of today.

The titles of these *Satires* are self-explanatory, except for No. 4, "Southern Breeze," which alludes to Abel Meeropol's great song, made famous by Billie Holiday, "Strange Fruit." (This has a particular significance for me, because Meeropol lived in the town where I grew up, Springfield, Massachusetts. He and his wife adopted the two sons of Julius and

Ethel Rosenberg, with whom I came into indirect contact.) No. 1, "A Serious Business," is just what it says, announcing that we are going to hear some music that is not to be taken lightly, haha! No. 2, "One Damn Thing After Another," is a kind of footnote to Hegel's *Philosophy of History*. The title of No. 3, "Wig Bubble," is an expression that my old friend from the Living Theatre, Steve ben Israel, used to use to describe ideas that came under the influence of hallucinogenic substances; it is probably taken from Lord Buckley, who was one of his heroes. No. 5, "Life is a Riddle," is probably the most serious of them all. It may have some relation to Georges Perec's novel *La Vie Mode d'Emploi*, which is, however, a masterpiece, while my piece is just a piddling thing. I'm not sure myself if I understand what it is or what it means, but if I did, it wouldn't be a riddle, would it?"

~ Frederic Rzewski

George Antheil, String Quartet no. 1

"Don't make a mountain out of an Antheil!"[20]

One might say that George Antheil's first string quartet was ill-fated. He wrote the work over a series of "sleepless weeks," in anticipation of its first performance at the Parisian home of Natalie Barney on January 1, 1926. As Antheil put it, he "...was very sleepy indeed while delivering the score to my copyist. I left it in the taxicab." Antheil was able to reconstruct the piece in time for the premiere, thanks to some sketch material he had saved.[21] The work's major debut in the United States was obscured by the company it kept: it was on the same program as the disastrous performance of *Ballet Mécanique* at Carnegie Hall on April 10, 1927—a performance and reception that effectively (if unfairly) scuttled Antheil's reputation in his home country, and made things harder for him abroad.[22] Yet that performance included a number of pieces that displayed more than just Antheil's precocity. In addition to the first string quartet and the *Ballet Mécanique*, it also included his second violin sonata and the *Jazz Symphonietta* (also called *A Jazz Symphony*). These works contributed to his European acceptance (prior to the appearance of Antheil's first piano concerto) and ultimately the views of posterity.

Antheil's first quartet is a compact and dense work in a single movement. The Library of Congress holds an annotated correction copy that has been tentatively dated to 1925, and it contains several revisions and suggestions for alternative readings that are interesting but not definitive without corroboration or clarification. The quartet opens with what seems to be a Shrovetide nod to Stravinsky's *Petrushka*. The rocking motion of the main melodic

20 Headline response to his infamous Carnegie Hall concert on April 10, 1927, as remembered by Antheil in Antheil, George, *Bad Boy of Music* (New York: Doubleday, 1945; Samuel French reprint 1990), 196. Another doozy from that concert: "Forty million Frenchmen CAN be wrong!"

21 Antheil, 173.

22 Ibid., 194-5. Even with Eugene Goosens conducting and colleagues like Aaron Copland at one of the pianos, the evening was not salvageable.

idea is echoed in the accompaniment, and Antheil capitalizes on that rocking feature in many of the other accompanimental and melodic materials in the piece. While one might characterize the music of the quartet as juxtapositions of different ideas that recur in changing contexts, some of the shared qualities of the different materials lead me to think of them also in terms of thematic transformation. The *plus lent* and *calme* music developed next is quite beautiful—an adjective that Antheil may not have appreciated at this stage in his compositional life, but there you have it. Antheil is inventive and resourceful in his use of the material throughout the quartet's single movement, and despite being the longest movement he wrote for the medium, the quartet offers a succinct exploration of Antheil's ideas. It is a lesser-known work by a provocative composer, and rarely played; the Del Sol String Quartet is one of the few that has recorded and performed this unique music, along with Antheil's other two numbered quartets, the *Lithuanian Night* and *Six Little Pieces*.

Ben Johnston, String Quartet no. 10

Ben Johnston celebrated his 90th birthday just last month, and this performance of his final string quartet marks the first appearance (to our knowledge) of his music on the Coolidge stage—a belated but fitting moment for a composer who is a contemporary of our series. Johnston is best known as a "microtonal" composer, and an advocate for the use of extended just intonation. He worked with Harry Partch and was influenced by his thinking, but ultimately ended up going his own way. Other supporters included John Cage, Otto Luening and Vladimir Ussachevsky,[23] but ultimately Johnston developed his own approach to composing and notating his music. The rationale for going beyond equal temperament is both philosophical and technical, but draws on the awareness that tuning has not been the same historically across cultures and contexts, and need not be the same now or in the future. While Johnston explored the possibilities available to him of working in the realm of electronic music (and with music made with pre-tuned instruments, like his *Sonata for Microtonal Piano*), he ultimately focused on working with musicians who could achieve his tuning goals by ear—and the string quartet offered a wonderful medium in which to experiment.

Johnston's tenth string quartet strikes an impressive balance in showing some of the qualities of Johnston's preferred tuning system within a context familiar enough to listeners who may be new to it. This is accomplished in part by the juxtaposition of an energetic lower three lines (that start in "G minor") against an augmented (slower-moving) melodic version of the faster material. The tuning differences may be most apparent in this melody, and reinforced when the instruments play in unison at the octave. Shared arrivals at full chords serve as structural pillars in the first movement. The lovely secondary material features a role reversal in which the violins provide a softly rocking accompaniment above

23 Johnston, Ben, "Who Am I? Why Am I Here?," ed. Sylvia Smith (Baltimore: Smith Publications, 2006), 2-3.

a viola/cello duet. Johnston utilizes repeats and alternate configurations of these basic ideas to complete the movement, which closes on a euphonious G-major chord.

The second movement is an exploration of what might have happened historically had composers gone with an alternative tonal orientation. In Johnston's words, he "...ask[s] the question... how would a Bach Chaconne sound if the composer had used Partch's Otonality and Utonality in place of major and minor scales?"[24] The result is a beautiful miniature that embraces the resulting harmonies that emerge from Johnston's treatment of a repeating melodic ground. The third movement is a classically-inspired scherzo that requires intrepid internal metronomes. The first violin plays a melody in the context of 4/4 above a plucked accompaniment, but the other instruments are respectively playing groups of five, six and seven against each other at all times. The use of pizzicato makes for a clever chaos, and one senses a tongue-in-cheek kinship between this and the opening movement.

The heart of Johnston's last quartet may be its final movement, the longest of the four. There is a Renaissance feel to the material, given some rhythmic vitality by the percussive wood-against-string strikes in the viola. The bulk of the movement is essentially a set of variations on this opening music, which progressively becomes more involved while retaining its essential nature. The music begins to shift with the meter change from 6/8 to 4/4. Over the course of sixteen measures, Johnston transforms latent musical gestures from the earlier music into an expressive setting of a familiar Irish tune.[25] The folk tune goes through several variations, including the incorporation of a walking bass line, before a mysterious one-measure coda in which the upper strings fade away to nothing while playing harmonic *glissandi*. Thus ends Johnston's fascinating cycle of string quartets, the product of a lifelong commitment to his musical creed.

~ David Henning Plylar

24 Johnston, 19. Partch's coined terms refer to the just tunings of harmonic and subharmonic series.

25 I don't want to give it away, but let's just say that the pipes will be calling.

About the Artists

Hailed by *Gramophone* as "masters of all musical things they survey" and two-time top winner of the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the **Del Sol String Quartet** is a leading force in 21st century chamber music.

Founded at the Banff Centre for the Arts in 1992 and based in San Francisco, the ensemble enjoys a unique vantage point. From its West Coast perch, Del Sol's performances explore narratives and cultures that represent the depth and range of human experience around the world, reflecting the stories and sounds of the Pacific Rim as vibrantly as those heard in European concert halls or East Coast art spaces.

Del Sol's collaborative performance projects and chamber music programs, which have become highly anticipated happenings in the Bay Area and beyond, embrace this panoramic and emotionally rich worldview. Del Sol has breached the wall between pit and stage in *STRINGWRECK*, its cheeky collaboration with critically acclaimed choreographers Janice Garrett and Charles Moulton; explored the intimate impact of AIDS in composer Ricky Ian Gordon's deeply moving, autobiographical chamber opera, *Green Sneakers*, with baritone Jesse Blumberg; and immersed the audience in a four-dimensional soundscape created with composer and video artist Chris Jonas in *GARDEN*. Whether diving deeply into a single work or transcending the limits of genre, Del Sol's carefully crafted chamber music programs engage audiences fully in the concert experience.

Through its extensive commissioning of composers and innovative performances, Del Sol has premiered well over 100 works representing a diverse range of contemporary voices, including Terry Riley, Mason Bates, Gabriela Lena Frank, Chinary Ung, Mohammed Fairouz, Tania León, Ken Ueno, Peter Sculthorpe, Reza Vali, and Per Nørgård.

Many of these works are included in Del Sol's eclectic discography—eight, critically-acclaimed, full-length albums that reflect the ensemble's fascination with the intersection of place and culture. *The New York Times* praised Del Sol's most recent recording, *Scrapyard Exotica* (2015), on the GRAMMY Award-winning Sono Luminus label: "See if your foot can stay still once you put on this funky disc of rhythmically infectious…music played by the adventurous Del Sol String Quartet." *BBC Music Magazine* lauded this "beautifully performed disc…featur[ing] three new works which reimagine the string quartet genre in contrasting, colourful and intriguing ways."

Other Del Sol recordings have explored the "hypnotic sound world" of Peter Sculthorpe (*Sculthorpe: The Complete String Quartets with Didjeridu*); reveled in musical languages from Peru, Turkey, Spain, Iran and Uzbekistan (*Zia*); featured composers from the Pacific Rim (*Ring of Fire*); illuminated the string quartets of George Antheil, Marc Blitzstein and Robert Erickson; and created a vibrant dialogue between 20th century masters and young composers from the Americas (*Tear*).

The Quartet has performed at prestigious venues around the world, including the Kennedy Center, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Museum and National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC; Symphony Space in New York City; Other Minds Festival of

New Music in San Francisco; Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Santa Cruz, CA; Clefworks Festival, Montgomery, AL; Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Houston; Santa Fe Opera in NM; Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, NY; Candlelight Concerts, Columbia, MD; University of Vermont Lane Series in Burlington, VT; Davos and Hirzenberg Music Festivals in Switzerland; and the Chengdu Festival of Contemporary Music in China.

With its deep commitment to education, Del Sol has reached thousands of K-12 students through inventive school performances, workshops, coaching and residencies. The quartet members also have worked closely with student composers, musicians and faculty artists at universities across the country, including Dartmouth, MIT, Brandeis, Northeastern, Georgetown, Carnegie Mellon, University of New Mexico, University of California at Berkeley and Santa Cruz, the Peabody Institute, the Manhattan School of Music and San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Jennifer Koh is recognized for her intense, commanding performances, delivered with dazzling virtuosity and technical assurance. She is dedicated to performing the violin repertoire of all eras from traditional to contemporary, believing that the past and present form a continuum. Koh has been heard with leading orchestras worldwide and appears frequently at major music centers and festivals as a prolific recitalist. In 2015-16, she partners with pianist Shai Wosner for *Bridge to Beethoven*, a recital series that explores the impact and significance Beethoven has had on a diverse group of composers and musicians, comprising Beethoven's complete violin sonatas paired with new works by Anthony Cheung, Vijay Iyer, and Andrew Norman. *Bridge to Beethoven* will be presented this season at the Aspen and Ravinia festivals, as well as in New York, Boston and San Francisco, among other cities. Koh's orchestral highlights include her Minnesota Orchestra and Pittsburgh Symphony debuts, and performances with the Buffalo Philharmonic and Milwaukee Symphony. She also performs Anna Clyne's violin concerto, a work composed for Koh, with the Princeton Symphony. Koh is Artistic Director of MusicBridge, a non-profit organization she founded to foster and promote collaborations between artists of diverse disciplines and styles. For further information, visit www.jenniferkoh.com.

Frederic Rzewski

I was born in Westfield, Mssachusetts, in 1938. At age 5 I began piano lessons with Gertrude Goldberg, then from age 7 to 14 I studied piano, harmony, and counterpoint with Charles Mackey of Springfield. For two years I attended Philips Academy in Andover, where I met my lifelong friend David Behrman. Among my classmates were the artists Hollis Frampton, Frank Stella, and Carl André. I then studied for four years at Harvard, where, my teachers were Walter Piston and Randall Thompson. I was also deeply influenced by the philosopher Jacob Taubes, who introduced me to Herbert Marcuse and

Susan Sontag, and to the work of Theodore Adorno. I went to Darmstadt in the summer of 1956, where I met Stockhausen, Boulez, and others of their generation who played an important part in my life as a pianist over the next decade, as well as Christian Wolff, who also became a lifelong friend. I did two years of graduate study at Princeton, where my teachers were Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt, and the musicologist Oliver Strunk. I then went to Italy in 1960 with a Fulbright scholarship to study with Luigi Dallapiccola.

It was in Europe that both my career and family life began. I met my wife Nicole Abbeloos there, with whom I had four children over the next twenty years. I had played the Boulez *Sonatine* the year before with the flutist Severino Gazzelloni, who found me in Florence and invited me to the Venice Biennale. I played many concerts with him over the following years. I also did the first performance of Stockhausen's revised *Klavierstück 10*. Stockhausen invited me to teach at his newly founded Kölner Kurse für Neue Musik in Cologne. Elliott Carter asked me to join him in Berlin in 1964 and 1965 as part of the Ford Foundation's residency program there, where I met Alvin Curran, at that time a Carter student. I also worked for several months at the experimental studio in East Berlin, where I made my electronic composition *Zoölogischer Garten*.

In 1966 several Americans in Rome, including myself and Alvin, Richard Teitelbaum, Allen Bryant, and Jon Phetteplace, formed the group Musica Elettronica Viva, partly inspired by the Living Theatre and the recent work of John Cage and David Tudor. Until that time, electronic music was mostly produced in laboratory conditions in expensive studios. There were several other, similar groups, formed at around the same time, like the Sonic Arts Union (which included my friend David Behrman). The idea common to all of these groups was that experimental music need not be élitist, but could be produced with simple materials available to anybody living in a large city. Coupled with this idea was the newly awakened interest in free improvisation, and a loose connection with revolutionary politics as the spontaneous expression of a mass movement against war and capitalism. This idea still continues to have a certain influence: this year is the 50th anniversary of M.E.V., which now consists of the trio of myself, Alvin, and Richard.

In 1971 I moved back to New York, but failed to find a permanent position in the U.S. In 1977 Henri Pousseur offered me a job teaching at the Royal Conservatory in Liège, Belgium, where I taught for 25 years. In 1983 I met the actress Françoise Walot, with whom I had two children. During these decades I have been a nomad, living as a composer and pianist, occasionally teaching in various universities and conservatories in the U.S. and Europe. I have also been able to produce a large number of compositions for orchestra and various instrumental groups, as well as piano solo. My music theatre pieces *The Persians* and *Triumph of Death* have been produced in various theatres in Europe.

In 2009 I received an honorary doctorate from the University of Liège. I am a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as the Akademie der Künste Berlin.

Upcoming Events

Visit loc.gov/concerts for more information

Tuesday, May 3, 2016– 12:00 pm [Lecture]
WAGNER'S "GLEAMING SWORD:"
Exploring the Helen Traubel Collection at the Library of Congress
James Wintle, Music Division
Whittall Pavilion (Registration Suggested)

Tuesday, May 3, 2016– 8:00 pm [Concert]
YEFIM BRONFMAN
Bronfman performs the three "War Sonatas" of Sergei Prokofiev
Coolidge Auditorium (Tickets Required)
Pre-concert lecture - 6:30pm
"Prokofiev, the Sonata, and the Fingers of Independence"
David Henning Plylar, Music Division
Whittall Pavilion (No Tickets Required)

Saturday, May 7, 2016– 11:00 am [Lecture]
#DECLASSIFIED: BEETHOVEN'S PORTRAIT
A look at unusual Beethoven artifacts at the Library of Congress
Anne McLean, Music Division
Whittall Pavilion (Registration Required)

Tuesday, May 10, 2016– 12:00 pm [Lecture]
THE PLACE OF MUSIC IN A GERMAN RENAISSANCE LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION:
Laura Yust, Music Division
Whittall Pavilion (Registration Suggested)

Saturday, May 14, 2016– 9:00 pm [Concert]
LIBRARY LATE: THE PEDRITO MARTINEZ GROUP
Coolidge Auditorium (Tickets Required)

Thursday, May 19, 2016– 7:00 pm [Lecture]
AMS LECTURE: REVISITING MENDELSSOHN'S OCTET, OR THE MATURING OF PRECOCITY
R. Larry Todd, PhD, Arts & Sciences Professor of Music, Duke University
Montpelier Room (Tickets Required)

loc.gov/concerts

Concerts from the Library of Congress

The Coolidge Auditorium, constructed in 1925 through a generous gift from ELIZABETH SPRAGUE COOLIDGE, has been the venue for countless world-class performers and performances. GERTRUDE CLARKE WHITTALL presented to the Library a gift of five Stradivari instruments which were first heard here during a concert on January 10, 1936. These parallel but separate donations serve as the pillars that now support a full season of concerts made possible by gift trusts and foundations that followed those established by Mrs. Coolidge and Mrs. Whittall.

Concert Staff

CHIEF, MUSIC DIVISION	Susan H. Vita
ASSISTANT CHIEF	Jan Lauridsen
SENIOR PRODUCERS FOR CONCERTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS	Michele L. Glymph Anne McLean
MUSIC SPECIALISTS	Nicholas A. Brown David H. Plylar
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	Donna P. Williams
RECORDING ENGINEER	Michael E. Turpin
TECHNICAL ASSISTANT	Sandie (Jay) Kinloch
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Solomon E. HaileSelassie
CURATOR OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS	Carol Lynn Ward-Bamford
CURATOR OF THE COOLIDGE FOYER DISPLAY	Raymond A. White
BOX OFFICE MANAGER	Anthony Fletcher
PROGRAM DESIGN	David H. Plylar
PROGRAM PRODUCTION	Michael Munshaw

Special thanks to Steinway Technician Rodney Butler
for his preparation of the piano used this evening

Support Concerts from the Library of Congress

Support for Concerts from the Library of Congress comes from private gift and trust funds and from individual donations which make it possible to offer free concerts as a gift to the community. For information about making a tax-deductible contribution please call (202-707-5503), e-mail (jlau@loc.gov), or write to Jan Lauridsen, Assistant Chief, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540-4710. Contributions of $250 or more will be acknowledged in the programs. All gifts will be acknowledged online. Donors can also make an e-gift online to Friends of Music at www.loc.gov/philanthropy. We acknowledge the following contributors to the 2015-2016 season. Without their support these free concerts would not be possible.

Gift And Trust Funds

Julian E. and Freda Hauptman Berla Fund
Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation
William and Adeline Croft Memorial Fund
Da Capo Fund
Ira and Leonore Gershwin Fund
Isenbergh Clarinet Fund
Irving and Verna Fine Fund
Mae and Irving Jurow Fund
Carolyn Royall Just Fund
Kindler Foundation Trust Fund
Dina Koston and Robert Shapiro Fund for New Music
Boris and Sonya Kroyt Memorial Fund
Wanda Landowska/Denise Restout Memorial Fund
Katie and Walter Louchheim Fund
Robert Mann Fund
McKim Fund
Norman P. Scala Memorial Fund
Karl B. Schmid Memorial Fund
Judith Lieber Tokel & George Sonneborn Fund
Anne Adlum Hull and William Remsen Strickland Fund
Rose and Monroe Vincent Fund
Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation
Various Donors Fund

Donor Contributions

Producer ($10,000 and above)
The Reva and David Logan Foundation
Dr. Sachiko Kuno and Dr. Ryuji Ueno
Adele M. Thomas Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Guarantor ($5,000 and above)
Mallory Walker and Diana Walker

Underwriter ($2,500 and above)
British Council USA
Embassy of Sweden & Swedish Arts Council
George Sonneborn and Rosa C. Iping
Ruth, Carl and Beryl Tretter

Benefactor ($1000 and above)
Stephen and Louise Burton
Susan Clampitt and Dr. Jeremy P. Waletzky
Dr. Ronald M. Costell and Marsha E. Swiss
In memory of Dr. Giulio Cantoni and Mrs. Paula Saffiotti
Remmel T. Dickinson
Diane Dixson
Andrew and Eleanor Glass
Milton J. Grossman,
In memory of Dana Krueger Grossman
Randy Hostetler Living Room Music Project and Fund
Dexter M. Kohn
David A. Lamdin,
In memory of Charles B. and Ann C. Lamdin
Egon and Irene Marx
John Mineto Ono

Benefactor (Continued)
Joyce E. Palmer
Dr. Judith C. and Dr. Eldor O. Pederson
Mace Rosenstein and Louise de la Fuente
S&R Foundation
June H. Schneider

Patron ($500 and above)
Anonymous
The Hon. Morton I. and Sheppie Abramowitz
Mr. and Mrs. David Alberts
William D. Alexander
Daniel J. Alpert and Ann H. Franke
Devora and Samuel Arbel
Agatha and Laurence Aurbach
Bill Bandas
Leonard N. Bebchick
The Hon. Anthony C. and Delores M. Beilenson
Peter and Ann Belenky
David and Judith Bernanke
Sandra J. Blake,
In memory of Ronald Diehl
Marc H. and Vivian S. Brodsky
Richard W. Burris and Shirley Downs
Dr. Susan Canning and Dr. Adam Lowy
Doris N. Celarier
William A. Cohen
Herbert L. and Joan M. Cooper
Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation
Becky Jo Fredriksson and Rosa D. Wiener
Fred S. Fry, Jr.
Geraldine and Melvin C. Garbow
Howard Gofreed
The Richard & Nancy Gould Family Fund
Wilda M. Heiss
Frederic and Lucia Hill Charitable Fund
Sheila and John Hollis
Harold F. Kendrick
Sandra D. Key, *In memory of Dr. James W. Pruett*
Virginia Lee, *In memory of Dr. & Mrs. C.C. Choi*
Rainald and Claudia Lohner
Mary Lynne Martin
Winton E. Matthews, Jr.
Donogh McDonald
John and Eileen Miller
Undine A. and Carl E. Nash
Morton and Ruth Needelman
John P. O'Donnell
Arthur Purcell

Patron (Continued)
Robert Roche and Nancy Hirshbein
Bruce Rosenblum
Rebecca and Sidney Shaw,
In memory of Dr. Leonard G. Shaw
Christopher Sipes
Beverly and Philip Sklover
Maria Soto,
In memory of Sara Arminana
Elaine Suriano
James C. Tsang
Joan Undeland,
In memory of Richard E. Undeland
Harvey Van Buren
Linus E. and Dolores R. Wallgren,
In memory of Dana Krueger Grossman
Sidney Wolfe and Suzanne Goldberg

Sponsor ($250 and above)
Anonymous (2)
Henry and Ruth Aaron
Eve E. Bachrach,
In memory of Laurel and Linda Bergold
Elena Bloomstein
Jill D. Brett
The Caceres-Brown Family,
In memory of Beryl A. Brown & Frances Rowan
Gerald Cerny
Edward A. Celarier and Gail Yano
Carol Ann Dyer
Lawrence Feinberg
Ronna L. and Stanley C. Foster
Elizabeth A. Fulford
Roberta A. Gutman,
In memory of David Gutman
Margaret F. Hennessey,
In memory of Edward Schmeltzer
Zona Hostetler
R. Bruce Johnston
In honor of Carolyn and Bob Johnston
Phyllis C. Kane
Kay and Marc Levinson
Eileen Mengers,
In memory of Charles and Eileen Mengers
George P. Mueller
Victor Roytburd
Irving L. and Juliet A. Sablosky
Linda Sundberg
Ianina J. Tobelmann
Jan Wolff

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS